

VZCZCXYZ0012
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHJM #2007 1371556
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 171556Z MAY 06
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2209
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002007

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGGERFO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/17/2016
TAGS: [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER DEPLOYS MILITANTS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 01467

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 01622

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Interior Minister Siad Siam deployed the recently formed Special Security Force, composed of militants from several factions, in Gaza on May 17 following several weeks of escalating violence. Siam took this action after gunmen assassinated two prominent HAMAS military leaders in Gaza on May 16. END SUMMARY.

HAMAS-PSO Tensions
Spark Killings

[1](#)2. (C) Interior Minister Siam announced his decision to deploy the Special Security Force after several days of escalating violence between HAMAS militants and elements of the Fatah affiliated PSO. Gunmen thought to have been affiliated with HAMAS blew up several cars parked outside the home of PSO officer Tahir Khwaiter on May 16 in Gaza City's Zaytun neighborhood. According ConGen contacts, Khwaiter was among the PSO officers responsible for several recent incidents in which HAMAS PLC members were manhandled or embarrassed by the PSO (ref A).

[1](#)3. (C) Later the same day, unidentified gunmen apparently responded by killing HAMAS military leader Muhammad al-Tatar. Al-Tatar was struck by gunfire from a passing car as he drove through downtown Gaza City. In a separate incident, gunmen wounded HAMAS military leader Muhammad Musbeh at 2100L on May 16 as he sat in a barbershop in the village of Abassan al-Jadida near Khan Yunis. Six militants and several bystanders were also wounded. Officials from the President's Office in Ramallah indicated to POL FSN during a May 17 telcon that elements of the PSO were believed to have been involved in both attacks.

HAMAS Responds by
Deploying Militants

[1](#)4. (C) In response to the escalating violence, Interior Minister Said Siam announced on May 17 that he had decided to deploy in Gaza the recently formed Special Security Force, composed of militants from several factions and led by PRC leader Jamal Abu Samhadaneh (ref B). Asked by reporters if he had coordinated the move with President Abbas, Siam responded testily saying, "Everything we do is coordinated with the President." Siam added that the move was necessary because the PA security forces were failing to fulfill their

responsibilities. Fatah PLC leader Azzam al-Ahmad denounced the move as "dangerous and illegal" during an interview with Voice of Palestine radio.

15. (C) Several ConGen contacts confirmed that the Special Security Force -- carloads of masked gunmen affiliated with the PRC and HAMAS, military wing -- were patrolling areas of Gaza City and northern Gaza on May 17. Gaza-based UN OCHA official Hamada Bihari said that tensions are high throughout Gaza, commenting that HAMAS had used its militias this way in the past following clashes with Fatah. The "only difference is now they are the in the PA.8 Bihari predicted further violence and said the situation could escalate "beyond control" if the HAMAS-led Special Security Force moves against PSO buildings or training facilities used by Fatah militants.

WALLES